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STUDENT AFFAIRS

Strategic Priority Funding Application Form 2007-2008

#9

Project Name Expansion of the Residential Learning Communities Program

Applicant's Name Joel Johnson Mailing Address 10 Gage Complex

Applicant Signature _____

Email Address joel.johnson-1@mnsu.edu Phone Number 507-389-5098

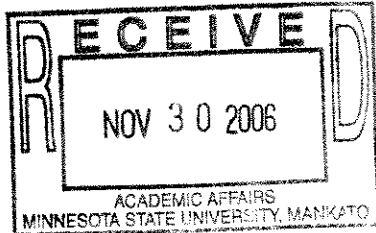
Dept. Chair Signature _____ Date _____

Dean Signature _____ Date _____

Vice President Signature [Signature] Date 11-30-06

Date Submitted to Office of Institutional Planning: November 30, 2006
(Deadline is November 30, 2006)

Priority Number



Minnesota State University, Mankato FY08 Strategic Priority Funding Request

1. Which Strategic Priority and Objective does this funding request support? See link for Strategic Priority definitions. <http://www.mnsu.edu/president/priorities/definitions/>

Strategic Priority Enrollment Management Innovative Idea: Learning Community Expansion

Strategic Priority Objective Increase First Year Student Retention to MSU and overall student Satisfaction with their MSU experience.

2. Provide a brief description of your project. Please attach a **one** page project narrative:

Money is requested for Fiscal 09, to be implemented fall of 2008. Learning Community offerings are Finalized with academic departments and Residential Life, 9 months in advance of the fall semester implementation, necessitating a request now for Fiscal 09 dollars. Request is for an additional 7 Learning Communities, to serve both academic declared majors and undeclared students, thus adding an additional 175 students to the program for fall of 2008.

3. How will the funding request support the Strategic Priority?

- Funding will provide additional Learning Communities to allow for additional enrollment opportunities for NEF students. Many Learning Communities have long waiting lists of students desiring enrollment and are not currently accommodated
- Funding for GA is requested to assist Assistant Director with administrative oversight of program, including staff supervision, programmatic planning, and course administration for both fall and spring terms

4. Describe the measurable outcomes:

a. Increase overall MSU First Year Retention rate

b. Increase students GPA's in the first year

c. Increase student satisfaction with their MSU experience

d. Increase student engagement in the MSU academic and student life communities

5. Assessment Measures – Define what methods will be used in assessing the effectiveness of the project.

a. GPA and Retention Rate Comparisons with students not enrolled

b. College Student Experiences Questionnaire

c. Focus Groups

d. _____

Reports Due:

6. Mid Year Report due January 31, 2008

7. **Summary Report due** June 30, 2008

8. **Budget Request:** From Strategic Initiative Funding

	<u>Request</u>	<u>Match</u>
Salary	_____	_____
Fringe	_____	_____
Grad Assistant	<u>\$9,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Grad Assistant Stipend	_____	_____
Non Salary (Specify)		
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$26,200</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>\$14,000 LC Staff</u>	_____	_____
<u>\$12,200 Programmatic Money</u>	_____	_____
Equipment	_____	_____
Total Budget Requested *	<u>\$35,200</u>	

9. **Special consideration (e.g. room, building, office or any impact on other divisions):**

NONE

* Pending funding.

Narrative for Learning Community Expansion Proposal

The Learning Communities Program in the Office of First Year Experience was started in 1999. A Learning Community on our campus is defined as a community where students take some of their semester classes together and live on the same residence hall floor providing an excellent opportunity to connect with other first year students. Each Learning Community has their own Learning Community Coordinator (LCC) who is dedicated to the academic success of every member as they transition to college life at Minnesota State, Mankato. The LCC assists each student in setting academic goals, develops study groups for the community, and plans service work, cultural appreciation, and other events. A variety of Learning Communities are offered each fall term. Examples of Learning Communities include, Engineering, Business, Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Aviation, Elementary Education, and communities designated for students Undeclared in major. The Learning Community program has a high demand by students to enroll, with some communities having long waiting lists and students who are not able to enroll due to seat availability per community.

Learning Communities over the past several years have positively affected retention rates, student success and integration to Minnesota State University. Assessment from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire Assessment tool, has illustrated that LC students are significantly more involved with;

- The Library
- Course Learning
- Writing Experiences
- Faculty
- Art, Music, and Theatre
- Scientific and Quantitative Experiences
- Clubs and Organizations
- Personal Experiences
- Campus Facilities

Students have also discussed a higher level of satisfaction with their MSU experience and a higher degree of likelihood to return to college.

Retention rates reflect these findings. Please note the following data provided by Institutional Research Office.

First-Time, Full-Time Fall Semester New Freshmen (also includes early summer enrollees)	1st Fall Cohort N	AVG HS PCTILE	AVG ACT COMP	1st Spring Return N	1st Term Rate	2nd Fall Return N	One Year Rate	3rd Fall Return N	Two Year Rate	GPA end of 1st Fall	Cumulative first year GPA of 2nd Fall Returnees
NEF 2001- 2002											
Learning	187	59.5	21.3	178	95.2%	148	79.1%	130	69.5%	2.83	2.97

Communities												
Control Group	1,926	61.1	21.4	1,765	91.6%	1,520	78.9%	1,282	66.6%	2.80	2.89	

NEF 2002-2003												
Learning Communities	209	60.7	21.8	199	95.2%	167	79.9%	146	69.9%	2.92	3.02	
Control Group	1,840	61.0	21.4	1,681	91.4%	1,422	77.3%	1,215	66.0%	2.79	2.92	

NEF 2003-2004												
Learning Communities	242	61.5	21.8	223	92.1%	193	79.8%	166	68.6%	2.95	3.02	
Control Group	2,020	61.8	21.4	1,828	90.5%	1,561	77.3%	1,332	65.9%	2.83	2.98	

NEF 2004-2005												
Learning Communities	231	64.0	21.5	212	91.8%	185	80.1%	156	67.5%	3.05	3.03	
Control Group	1,902	60.3	21.4	1,738	91.4%	1,446	76.0%	1,203	63.2%	2.90	2.89	

NEF 2005-2006												
Learning Communities	245	62.0	21.6	224	91.4%	195	79.6%			2.98	3.06	
Control Group	1,985	60.5	21.5	1,787	90.0%	1,537	77.4%			2.84	2.97	

NEF 2006-2007												
Learning Communities	267	63.0	21.8									
Control Group	1,872	60.4	21.7									

AVERAGES*												
Learning Communities		61.8	21.6		93.0%		79.7%		68.8%	2.95	3.02	
Control Group		60.9	21.5		91.0%		77.4%		65.5%	2.83	2.93	

***Note:** Retention rate averages are true averages.
 HS percentile, ACT and GPA are averages of averages.

Special Initiative Money requested includes additional dollars to hire seven additional Learning Community Coordinators, one for each of the seven new proposed communities. This position is a peer mentor position which provides academic support programming, faculty to student connection and mentoring opportunities, and social programming geared at assisting students to get involved in the MSU and Mankato communities. Programmatic dollars are also requested to support functions planned and implemented for each community, from academic support groups, student meetings, social gatherings, and educational programming geared to enhance the student experience and integrate the appropriate academic interest area of the specific community.

Finally, one Graduate Assistant is requested to assist in the administration of the program. Currently, no Graduate Assistant is funded for this program. Significant administrative oversight is required by the Assistant Director in the areas of staff supervision, academic course management for hundreds of course seats each fall and spring term, student crisis and personal issue management, marketing and student enrollment to program, and budget management. The requested Graduate Assistant would provide assistance in key areas required to successfully deliver the program.

Based on this information, a logical recommendation is to grow the size of the Learning Community program to allow for higher levels of student participation. Based on current data, this growth will further influence retention dollars generated, assist students in achieving the educational outcomes as directed by program, and create a unique enrollment management marketing tool for campus.